

VZCZCXYZ0002  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHZP #0537/01 1832202  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 012202Z JUL 08  
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2230  
INFO RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 000537

SIPDIS

STATE FOR: WHA/CEN (E. TELLO) AND AMB-DES BARBARA STEPHENSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/26/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PM](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [EDEV](#)

SUBJECT: PANAMA: PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR'S MEETING WITH FIRST  
VP AND FM SAMUEL LEWIS; MFA, PANAMA CITY, PANAMA; JUNE 26,  
[1](#)2008.

Classified By: POLCHIEF BRIAN R. NARANJO. REASON: 1.4 (D)

-----  
EVENT  
-----

[1](#)1. (U) Peace Corps Director Ronald Tschetter's meeting with  
First VP and FM Samuel Lewis.

-----  
TIME, DATE AND PLACE  
-----

[1](#)2. (U) 8:00 am, Thursday, June 26; Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs, Panama City, Panama.

-----  
PARTICIPANTS  
-----

[1](#)3. (U)

Panama:

-----  
First VP and FM Samuel Lewis

U.S.:

-----  
Peace Corps Director Ronald Tschetter  
Ambassador William A. Eaton  
Peace Corps Country Director Peter Redmond  
Peace Corps Staff Assistant David Miller  
POL Fellow Aqueelah Torrance (notetaker)

-----  
Summary:  
-----

[1](#)4. (C) To celebrate Peace Corps' 45 year commitment to  
service in Panama, Director Tschetter, Ambassador Eaton,  
and Country Director Peter Redmond met with FM Samuel Lewis  
at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Foreign Minister  
expressed his appreciation of the Peace Corps program and  
showed gratitude to the Ambassador for his service in Panama.  
(Note: Ambassador will conclude his tour in Panama on July  
5.) Director Tschetter and FM Lewis discussed the Peace  
Corps' contribution to economic growth and social development  
in Panama. Both were pleased with Panama's progress and  
optimistic about the country's potential for sustainable  
growth. Following discussion of the Peace Corps' program, FM  
Lewis highlighted the economic benefits of the Panama Canal

and underscored the importance of the U.S.-Panama Free Trade Agreement.

-----  
PEACE CORPS CELEBRATES 45 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP WITH PANAMA  
-----

15. (SBU) FM Lewis recognized the Peace Corps' contribution to economic growth and social development in Panama. Over 45 years, 1700 Peace Corps volunteers had served in Panama. The recent Peace Corps initiative to develop Panama's tourism industry and increase access to information technology had created economic opportunities for local communities, particularly those located in the countryside, Lewis asserted. FM Lewis encouraged Peace Corps to expand its tourism program to additional areas that could benefit from further income generation.

-----  
POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH  
-----

16. (SBU) Following Director Tschetter's recognition of Panama's economic growth, FM Lewis highlighted the economic benefits of the expansion of the Panama Canal. The FM noted that the expansion project was "ahead of schedule and under budget." He also mentioned that the project is scheduled to be completed August 15, 2014, the 100 year anniversary of its original opening. The canal, a vital geographic resource, generated jobs and stimulated a number of economic activities including tourism and trade, the FM said.

-----  
PRESIDENTIAL DELEGATION:U.S.-PANAMA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT  
-----

17. (C) FM Lewis mentioned that President Martin Torrijos would lead a delegation to Washington, DC to push for the U.S.-Panama Free Trade Agreement in September.

18. (U) Peace Corps Director Ronald Tschetter did not have an opportunity to clear this cable.  
EATON